

AT KEY NEWSLETTER
November 2008 **Vol. 13 No. 5**

IPAT Consumer Advisory Council

Judie Lee, IPAT Executive Director

The IPAT Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) provides advice for planning, implementing and evaluating the activities carried out by IPAT. The CAC was established in 1994 with members representing people with all types of disabilities, all ages, and all regions of the state. Membership was limited to individuals with disabilities or family members. The AT Act of 2004 changed the composition of the advisory councils to require agency representation from education, workforce investment act, vocational rehabilitation and independent living centers.

The Council's mission is to assure IPAT:

- Is responsive to the consumer;
- Includes persons with all disabilities and across all ages in every aspect of the program;
- Seeks meaningful consumer involvement at all levels of the program;
- Provides statewide access to assistive technology and services;
- Addresses assistive technology issues across environments (home, work, school, community, and play); and
- Collaboratively develops a long-range statewide plan for assistive technology.

Throughout the years, the CAC has been actively involved in shaping and planning IPAT activities. The various programs under IPAT (i.e. Equipment Loan Library, Demo Centers, Swap & Shop, & Financial Loan Program) have evolved with their guidance, advice and support. Members advise IPAT staff on whether the organizational services are meeting the needs of the people being served; they provide viewpoints from other organizations, agencies, or constituents; they are a liaison with regional community groups; they foster good public relations; they assist in outreach to under-represented groups in North Dakota and identify barriers to providing assistive technology devices and services. The CAC assists in program evaluation, setting goals and makes recommendations for change.

This active Council is made up of 10 members who have a disability or have a family member with a disability and 5 agency representatives. A list of current CAC members can be found on the IPAT website www.ndipat.org If you or someone you know is interested in serving on the IPAT CAC please contact the CAC Chairperson Bob Puyear at 44digits@bis.midco.net or call 800-895-4728.

The IPAT program recognizes that the advice and counsel of persons

with disabilities and their family members as well as the agency representatives provide a vital link to meeting the AT needs of people in North Dakota, and extends a sincere thank you to IPAT's Consumer Advisory Council.

All are Welcome at IPAT Technology Access Centers

Did you know that IPAT provides access to assistive technology devices and services through their comprehensive Technology Access Centers located in Fargo and Bismarck? IPAT does, and invites all those experiencing the effects of aging, individuals with disabilities, family members, care givers, service providers, employers, and anyone else interested in assistive technology (AT) to use the centers.

IPAT's Technology Access Centers are typically open Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm. During center hours of operation, individuals or groups are free to drop-in, or they may call ahead to set-up an appointment to have specific AT devices demonstrated or particular AT services explained. When visiting the centers, individuals may explore the environment on their own, or request the assistance of IPAT staff to demonstrate specific equipment and/or provide a general overview to AT services. These services are at no cost to the user.

To help the people of North Dakota and surrounding areas learn about and use AT, each center has a wide range of devices covering the following broad categories; activities of daily living, communication, seeing, hearing, learning, computer access, switches, telecommunications, memory, organization and environmental control. Devices can be compared and contrasted onsite, or at remote sites via video conferencing. Remote site access eliminates the barriers of distance and transportation and is made possible through collaboration between IPAT and the University of North Dakota's statewide telemedicine program. Again, this service component is available at no cost.

If you are curious about the potential of AT to help you or someone you know be more independent at home, school, work or in the community feel free to visit one of IPAT's Technology Access Centers, or call to set up a remote site visit through video-conferencing. The centers belong to all the people of North Dakota, and provide an opportunity for them to learn about and try-out different devices to enable them to make an informed choice about the equipment that best meets their individual needs. Use the information below to plan your TAC visit.



Fargo TAC
3509 Interstate Blvd.
1-800—895-4728



Bismarck TAC
400 E. Broadway Ave., Suite #306
1-888-540-4728

CONSUMER CONNECTION

One Ringy-Dingy, Two Ringy-Dingy

Isn't that a great sound? Hi, my name is Susan Wedberg, and I would like to tell you of the wonderful service from IPAT. I live by myself in Fargo, North Dakota and have Multiple Sclerosis. Several years ago I turned quadriplegic, and now I am not able to use any of my limbs whatsoever. With the help of caregivers, I am able to get around with the use of a power wheelchair, but everything else has to be done by a caregiver. Consequently, I am not able to dial out or answer a phone on my own. How many times a day do you talk on the phone? Most people talk quite frequently, every day for 365 days per year. This was a part of my life that was no longer accessible to me, so it was a real necessity for me to get back to communicating. Then Jeannie Krull, from IPAT, was able to get a voice activated dialer for me to use with a hands-free telephone, and did that ever open up a whole new world of communication for me. The equipment came from the ND Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Service program. I am now able to sit at my computer and call friends, family, as well as, local stores. Safety, independence and dignity are things that you lose with this disease, and through having a voice activated dialer and hands-free phone, I feel like I am getting some of that back. How fortunate I feel to be able to have this service offered to me.

Susan



FUNDING NEWS

AT Funding for Veterans ~ Part One

Assistive technology (AT) funding for the approximately 58,000 North Dakota servicemembers is most likely to come from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VA is the largest single medical care system in the United States and is one of the largest purchasers of assistive technology for people with disabilities. There are three broad areas under which a veteran can obtain support for AT needs: health, housing, and independent living.

Under the area of health, the VA's Prosthetics and Sensory Aids program may buy AT devices for veterans receiving VA care for any condition. Devices may include artificial limbs, orthopedic braces, wheelchairs, crutches and canes, and other durable medical equipment and supplies.

The VA also covers eye examination and audiology tests and writes eyeglass and hearing aid prescriptions for its eligible patients. Hearing aids and eyeglasses may also be directly provided to some veterans. Replacements may be allowed if a device is lost or broken and for new or changed prescriptions.

To get further information on the benefits described above, contact your local Veteran's Service Officer. Also, the North Dakota Veterans Affairs website address is: <http://www.nd.gov/veterans/>

EQUIPMENT SPOTLIGHT

VoicelR Infrared Environmental Voice Control System



Don't be alarmed! You're not looking at a newly discovered UFO. This is the VoicelR Infrared Environmental Voice Control System. It allows the following to be carried out using an individual's voice:

- Request help from bed at night with a remote, plug-in chime;
- Securely open entry or garage door without giving out keys or codes;
- Call, answer, dial and more with landline or cell phone;
- Control lights, blinds, drapes, thermostat, space heater, air-conditioner, ceiling fan, heating pad, electric blanket, fans/ionizer, and more;
- Raise or lower your Power Adjustable Bed.

With simple setup instructions and the added capability for learning remote codes, the VoicelR is a user friendly, comprehensive device. It allows for 120 voice commands, making it a functional choice when thinking about future needs. For a look at how the VoicelR works go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNYUfwdiFRw&feature=related>

For more information on this device please contact the manufacturer at: 612-851-1040 or visit their website at www.broadenedhorizons.com. If you would like to rent this item from the IPAT loan library, please call 1-800-895-4728 or email: ipatinfo@ndipat.org

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Bringing Accessibility Home

November 17, 2008

1pm – 4pm

Best Western Town House

710 1st Ave N

Grand Forks, ND

Joyce: 888-258-7949

Connecting for Empowerment

November 22, 2008

1pm – 6:45pm

or

November 23, 2008

9am – 12:30pm

AmericInn

600 S 3rd Ave S

Moorhead, MN

Joyce: 888-258-7949

Supporting Employment Outcomes in a Rural State

December 3, 2008

9am-4pm

Comfort Inn

1030 Interstate Ave

Bismarck, ND

Mary: 800-233-1737